

## **1. Practice and Objectives**

### **Practice**

The practice proposed for recognition seeks to explore one simple, yet dynamic element of another culture in a manner that reveals many charming and beautiful cultural treasures of the society. The practice seeks to do so while engaging students in a variety of very personal, very energized, integrated activities that develop useful lifelong skills and bring the observed society and its people close to hand and heart. The society is Japan and the simple element is the Tea Bowl.

Six traditional, hand turned, Japanese pottery wheels are designed and constructed in a corner of a third grade classroom. As the students learn first hand of the imaginative, perceptive, and small motor skills necessary to form a tea bowl from a lump of clay on a spinning wheel, they also become familiar with the tea bowl's place in Japanese society. They learn that the craftsman is not only talented but, also, that he is determined, and that skill comes with practice and perseverance. They learn that a modest object, made with one's own mind and hands, can be graced with a simple beauty that is warm and rich and close to nature.

### **Objectives**

1. Students will become familiar with, and share in cultural opportunities of another country, which, for most students, would be unlikely to be encountered otherwise. By producing a tea bowl and preparing for its use in a tea ceremony, students are exposed to aesthetic elements of Japanese art, dress, and manners. In addition, they are exposed to processes demonstrating respect and appreciation for fellow members of society and the importance and significance of one's own behaviors.

2. Students will develop specific skills related to the production of pottery and pottery-making devices. The production and design process enables students to access and develop imagination while at the same time encourages self control and perseverance.

In addition to learning a step-by-step method for forming a tea bowl on a hand-turned Japanese pottery wheel, the students also learn a hand building technique for making a traditional styled Japanese tea bowl.

3. Motivation was enhanced by the students' objective to make their own tea bowls. The tea bowls are used by parents in a Japanese Tea Ceremony that is the focal point of an evening of sharing project accomplishments. Students take great pride in developing the necessary understanding and control needed to make a tea bowl from a lump or pinches of clay. Since Japanese tea bowls are most often intentionally rough and off centered, students had the pleasure of noticing a great similarity in their work to the work of recognized Japanese master potters.

4. As the tea bowl production process takes place, students will visit internet sites, literature, and resource materials to gain an understanding of Japanese history, culture, art and nature. The students also will write personal accounts of their pottery-making experiences. They will use digital photography and word processing to develop step-by-step manuals documenting the pottery-making process. The manuals will be posted on the school's web page and bound for circulation in the school's library. All of these projects are presented during the culminating

evening program. The evening program is arranged into four attractions, each of which is presented by a group of students. A gallery of pedestaled tea bowls, a Japanese Tea Ceremony Room, the computer lab, and an area for oral presentation of written passages are visited by invited guests. All students learn how to participate in a Japanese Tea Ceremony as host and guest. Several students dress in traditional attire to host and serve tea to the parents. All students are responsible to teach their parents how to participate in the tea ceremony as honored guests.

### **Innovation**

Creating understanding between two diverse cultures can be accomplished with joy and deep appreciation by simulating important artistic traditions of the sister culture. By having students participate in expressive physical activities that require focus, determination, commitment, and communication on their part, we give them an opportunity to assimilate aspects of the culture in a manner that makes them truly their own. It's a *real* experience!

### **High Student Achievement**

The Japanese Tea Ceremony is a discipline of grace, beauty, and appreciation. Students greatly enjoy the opportunity to immerse themselves in a process so new and different. They take great care to train and do justice to what they quickly understand is an honored tradition of a society uniquely different from their own. They feel enriched by, and part of, Japan and its people. By offering their hand-crafted Japanese-styled tea bowl for use by their honored guests, the students complete the circle of gracious and giving hospitality.

The creation of the tea bowl on the pottery wheel requires focus, determination, and problem solving skills. Students make real time adjustments to their technique approach in order to be successful. They gain a real understanding of the power of creativity that is theirs to have by developing hand-mind proficiency.

Students communicate their experiences in several writing formats. They develop technology skills by using digital photography, computer graphics, and word processing to create extensions to the school's web page. Students also exercise formal and informal speaking skills as they exchange their knowledge of pottery and Japan.

### **Replication**

The design of the pottery center is unique. It can be easily and inexpensively constructed. Many schools do not wish to allocate the resource for a multiple pottery-wheel center. It could cost thousands of dollars. This center can be reproduced for under \$500. I based my design on a traditional Japanese stick-turned wheel. I have made them finger-pressure turned wheels for safety. The design is free for anyone to use as I am very interested in giving many children a unique pottery and cultural experience. We have posted the steps for construction on our school web page. The pottery center could have a successful art application in a school's art room as well. Though I fired the tea bowls in my own kiln, a community ceramic hobby house could be used at minimal expense if the replicating school does not own a kiln.

Since writing, technology, and presentations take place on several levels, replications can be successfully accomplished by incorporating key parts of the activities in the plan.

## 2. Educational Needs and Standards

### Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards

All students will use information, technology and other tools. Students will use the library, community, computer lab, internet, and personal resources to gather information about Japan and its people and produce products and presentations to communicate their new understanding, feelings, and knowledge. Students will create web pages to extend the school's web site.

All students will demonstrate self-management skills. Students will need to focus on the techniques necessary to control the clay on the wheel. Much like learning how to play a musical instrument, they will need to accept the responsibility of a disciplined, step-by-step mastery of technique. Students will modify their own approach to obtain their goal of a well-formed tea bowl. Students will work independently on self improvement. They will work cooperatively in groups to create written, visual, and physical presentations of their experience in a manner that reflects respect for others of diverse cultural and social backgrounds.

All students will apply safety principles. Students will maintain a clean and dust free clay studio. They will learn safe techniques that protect their hands while they are working the clay. They will manage the tea serving in a disciplined manner to protect themselves as well as their guests.

6.5 All students will acquire historical understanding of varying cultures throughout the history of New Jersey, The United States, and the World. Students become familiar with important elements of Japanese society. They simulate processes unique to Japanese culture. They then find ways to compare these experiences to their own culture and lives. They learn how the ancient arts of Japan have influenced the art in the young country of America. Students learn how cultures who had been enemies can become friends and share in each other's new societies. They send paper cranes as a wish for peace and friendship and memory of those lost in the bombing of Hiroshima.

6.7 All Students will acquire geographical understanding by studying the world in spatial terms. Students take an active role in questioning what, where, when, and why about the people, places, customs, and history of the Japanese people while they compare and contrast new knowledge about another culture to their own. They use maps and globes and examine products which traveled across the Pacific. They discuss time lines and travel strategies.

6.8 All students will acquire geographical understanding by studying human systems in geography. Students will compare and analyze demographic characteristics of Japan and relate it to the variables of their society, such as diet, that are unique and different from American attributes. They study weather patterns, fishing, wild life and agriculture while comparing and contrasting to the United States. Students discover how art and the concept of simple beauty have influenced costumes and traditions in Japan.

1.3 All students will utilize arts elements and arts media to produce artistic products and performance. Students will discover elements of pottery that are common to other areas of art.

Color, line, and form of the tea bowl, the movement of their hands through space, timing and pressure during the movement of the clay and wheel are important shared ingredients in the production of art.

1.4 All students will demonstrate knowledge of the process of critique. While learning the techniques needed to create a pottery tea bowl, students will receive and respond to criticism aimed at improving their perceptive skills. They will develop an understanding of what a centered piece of clay looks and feels like. They will observe their hand positions and adjust them following the advise and direction of the instructor. They will analyze their finished or partially-finished product to evaluate their progress toward a well-thrown tea bowl.

1.5 All students will identify the various historical, social, and cultural influences and traditions which have generated artistic accomplishments throughout the ages and which continue to shape contemporary arts. Students will learn that pottery is one of the original art forms common to almost all cultures. They will discover how chance and necessity played a role in developing a sophisticated art form that is full of imaginative and beautiful expressive elements shared by both American and Japanese art pottery. Students will integrate their pottery process with the Tea Ceremony, duplicating a cultural and historic process that took place in Japan. They use their senses, imagination and memory to develop and produce their unique and individual tea bowl.

3.1 All students will speak for a variety of real purposes and audiences. Students will listen to and read literature and stories from and about Japan. They will write about their personal experience with pottery production of tea bowls. Students will prepare and formally present projects related to the Japanese culture to an audience at a special sharing event. They will practice and prepare to deliver a traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony to an audience.

3.3 All students will write in clear, concise, and organized language that varies in content and form for different audience and purposes. Following appropriate pre-writing strategies, students will cooperate to write manuals that document the pottery making techniques to be shared with local and extended audiences. They will write their personal accounts of the pottery-making process to be read to an audience during the night of the Tea Ceremony. Final products will also be posted on the school web page.

### **3. Evaluation**

Students successfully craft at least two Japanese style tea bowls. During this year long project, teachers and students monitor their progress with critiques and sharing.

The tea bowls are displayed in a school gallery for the community to see as they enter the building. The tea bowls are used in a traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony. Students informally and formally discuss their knowledge of Japanese pottery and the pottery making process. They produce several pieces of writing that reflect their understanding of the process. The process is documented in four step-by-step illustrated manuals which are presented by the students to the community at a special evening event and posted on the school web site. All elements of this learning unit can be effectively replicated by referring to the web site.